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# THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE

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## JESUS OF NAZARETH HOW HE THOUGHT, LIVED, WORKED, AND ACHIEVED

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### JESUS WORKING IN GALILEE

#### 6. THE BEGINNING OF WORK IN GALILEE. MARK 1:14-45

Brief statements of Mark tell us that after John was delivered up (that is, thrown into prison) Jesus came into Galilee and began to preach, and that it was Herod, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, who imprisoned John. This suggests that perhaps after the baptism of Jesus, John moved northward to a point in or on the borders of Galilee, and that Jesus after his forty days of meditation in the wilderness either remained in retirement or began his preaching elsewhere (see John 3:22). Of this early work the first three Gospels give no account, but record the public work of Jesus as if following upon that of John. Luke (4:14) even speaks as if Jesus came directly from the wilderness to Galilee.

Read Mark 1:14, 15, and (1) notice the place of Jesus' work and the content of his message. (2) Compare this message with that of John as we have already studied it in section 3. This too is a call to repentance. In what vital respect does it differ from John's message? Does this difference seem to you only a matter of intellectual belief or is it also a revelation of the character and attitude of Jesus? (3) Matthew reports that John also said that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. If Matthew is right in this report, did John have the same idea of the Kingdom of God that Jesus had? (4) Judging from these brief reports of the preaching of Jesus and John, do you think that their idea of God was the same? If not, wherein did they differ? If their ideas of God and of the Kingdom of God were different, would you not expect to find their task in life and their expectation concerning the future, as well as their attitude toward people, to be different? Read Luke 4:16-22. Is it significant that we see in Jesus in this early stage of his career a definite appeal to hope rather than to fear? Could he have taken this attitude toward life had he not felt complete confidence in the fatherly love of God?

Read Mark 1:16-20. Consider: (1) Whether it is likely that this was the very first event of Jesus' work in Galilee. Would four men be likely to give up their business, leave their families, and become followers of a traveling preacher of whom they knew nothing? Or must we suppose that Mark 1:14, 15 covers a considerable period of preaching and teaching, and that when Jesus called these men they already knew him and had often talked with him? (2) On the other hand, is there anything in the record to suggest that Jesus demanded of them at this time a definite statement of opinion about him? What does the incident

of Mark 8:27-30, which happened months later, imply on this matter? (3) What was it about Jesus that led these men to become his followers? Was it his message, or himself, or both? Did they understand either perfectly at this time? (4) What does this incident suggest about Jesus' way of gaining followers? (5) Read also Mark 2:13, 14. What do both narratives imply as to his plans? Why did he want companions in his work? What does the expression "fishers of men" imply as to what he expected these men to do?

Read Mark 1:21-34. These verses tell the story of a day in Capernaum. It is perhaps an example of many similar days. It includes three incidents, one in the synagogue, one in Peter's home at midday, and one at evening. Suggest a title for each of these events.

Re-read 1:21-28. Consider: (1) The character of the synagogue service in Jesus' day. See Luke 4:16-22, which will suggest the order of service, and consult *Dictionary of the Bible*. (2) Jesus' habit about attendance in the synagogue. See Luke 4:16. (3) The character of Jesus' teaching. Just what does vs. 22 mean? The scribes were accustomed to appeal to the authority of Scripture, of traditions, and of the fathers. In this sense they also taught with authority? In what sense does the gospel record show that Jesus taught with authority? How did he seek to convince men that his teaching was worthy of acceptance? (4) What was the matter with the man referred to in vs. 23? What should we call such a man today? What did people think about him then? Was the belief in demons, evil spirits, widespread in those days? How were the demons supposed to be related to the devil? (5) Why did Jesus cure the man, and how? (6) Note the impression that the cure made, and its influence on Jesus' work.

Read Mark 1:29-34. Consider: (1) What elements entered into the power by which Jesus was able to cure the sick. (2) Why he included such work in his plan, and did not restrict himself to teaching and preaching. (5) Aside from the question of the power by which Jesus cured the sick and the demoniacs, do you think that the fact that he did so added to his influence as a teacher in his own day? (4) Has it made him more influential in the centuries since? If so, why? (5) Do you think his disciples of today ought to follow his example? If so, how?

Read Mark 1:35-39. The Jewish Sabbath was on Saturday. This incident follows immediately in time upon the events of the Sabbath in Capernaum, and fell, therefore, upon a Sunday. Read the story carefully and thoughtfully. (1) Notice the place which Jesus sought out as a place of prayer, and consider why he chose this place rather than to remain in the house. How does his conduct compare with his advice in Matt. 6:6? (2) Why did Jesus pray at all? Why did he need to pray? What did prayer do for him? (3) Why did he not go back to the town when people wanted him? What does the phrase, "For to this end came I forth," mean? What does it imply as to his place of work? (4) How long would it require to do all that is referred to in vs. 39? What was Jesus' message in these synagogues?

Read Mark 1:40-45. Give a name to this incident. Consider: (1) What characteristics of Jesus are illustrated by his act in healing the leper. (2) Why he forbade the leper to tell people of his cure. (3) Why he required him to observe the law referring to such cases. (4) What the incident shows about the place which

Jesus gave in his whole plan of work to his deeds of healing. Were they of prime importance? Were they simply means to an end? Were they wrought for their own sake but regarded by him as less important than something else?

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*Suggestions for further study.* 1. Mention is made in the narratives we have been studying of Galilee and Judea, and of Herod, the tetrarch. It will add interest and clearness to our study to have clearly before us how these regions were related to one another and how they were governed in Jesus' day. It will be worth while to study a map of Palestine and to fix in mind a picture of the whole land. To get a knowledge of the political situation see *Dictionary of the Bible* under "Herod," "Archelaus," "Pilate," or better still read chaps. xi and xii of Mathews' *History of New Testament Times*. 2. Jesus sometimes taught out of doors, on the mountain top, or by the seaside; sometimes in private homes, at the dinner table; and sometimes in the synagogue and temple. Recall as many places as you can in which he taught, and the forms that his teaching took. The synagogue worship in particular is worthy of special study. See *Dictionary of the Bible*, "Synagogue." How did the synagogue service differ from that of the temple? Out of which did our modern church service come? 3. The Gospels suggest that Jesus spent considerable time in healing the sick and the demoniacs. What place ought such work as this to have in the plans of the church of Christ today? Does the existence of trained and skilful physicians affect the matter? Ought ministers also to be healers? Ought missionary societies to send out physicians and conduct hospitals? If so, why and for what purpose should such work be conducted?

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#### 7. EARLY OPPOSITION TO JESUS. MARK 2:1-3:6

In his second chapter and the first six verses of his third chapter Mark narrates a series of incidents in all of which the scribes and Pharisees manifested a critical spirit toward Jesus, and at the end of which they even plot his death. Whether these incidents all occurred in as close connection as their arrangement in Mark's narrative would suggest is not altogether certain, but it is safe to assume that opposition to Jesus began to develop early.

In reading each of these five narratives notice especially in what the scribes were interested and in what Jesus was interested, and consider whether the difference in their interests was the cause of the widening gap between them, and of the increasing opposition of the scribes to Jesus.

Read Mark 2:1-12. Assuming that the house was probably a one-story building with a flat roof not of tiles but of a composition of clay and other materials, endeavor to picture the whole scene. Ask yourself: (1) Why did Jesus assure the man that his sins were forgiven before he healed his paralysis? Do you think that he would have done so if he had not seen in the man a desire to be free from his sin and to be reconciled to God? (2) Did Jesus think that God forgave sins unconditionally? See Matt. 6:14, 15, and compare Ps. 51:1-3; I John 1:8-10. (3) Why did the scribes object to his assuring the paralytic that his sins were forgiven? Did they believe in the forgiveness of sins? How did they think God assured men of forgiveness? See Luke 18:9-14. What was the real reason for their criticism of Jesus? (4) What is the meaning of Jesus' answer to their criticism? Is the possession of power in itself certain evidence of authority to speak for God? Does the possession of power and the disposition to use it to help one's fellow-men furnish some ground for trusting him who uses it thus? If so, why? See Matt. 5:34, 35; 7:16.

Read Mark 2:13-17. On the story of the call of Levi recall Mark 1:16-20 and suggestions on that passage in section 6. Read vs. 15-17. The publicans here spoken of were collectors of taxes imposed by the Roman government, and for that reason, as well as because of their representation of the heathen power, were generally disliked by their fellow-Jews. The sinners who are associated with them were people who did not keep the Jewish law with strictness. The very use of the term by the Pharisees suggests that the latter did not admit that they themselves were sinners, and that they thought of sin not as selfishness or harshness, or conduct that harmed others, but as violation of law; for example, the law of the Sabbath, or circumcision. The Jewish books show that they made much of these two in particular. Reading the passage with these facts in mind, consider as suggested above in what the scribes and Pharisees were most interested, formal observance of religious rules, or the welfare of people. In which of these does this narrative show Jesus to be most interested? Consider this carefully; it is a matter of great importance. Luke 7:36-50 and Matt. 23:1-15, although relating later incidents, help us at this point.

Read Mark 2:18-22. This incident illustrates two of the characteristic differences between Jesus and the other religious leaders of the day, including John. (1) Notice the reason that Jesus gives why his disciples should not fast, namely that these were for them days of joy. Of what does this imply that fasting was the expression? (2) What does it imply as to the morality and effect on character of professing to be sad when one is not sad and has no reason to be so? (3) As to the obligation to observe rules, even the ancient rules of religion, when these rules conflict with higher principles and the interests of men? (4) Which do you judge he regarded as the more normal in life, happiness or sadness? (5) What do vs. 21, 22 imply as to the possibility of expressing the spirit of his new message in the old forms that had come down by tradition? (6) Is there a value in old customs? In what does it consist? What should we do with them as long as they serve a useful purpose? What when they no longer serve human need? (7) How did Jesus answer this question? What was the answer of the scribes?

Read Mark 2:23-28. There are few more significant incidents in the Gospels than this one, partly because of the teaching about the Sabbath, but much more because of the disclosure of Jesus' estimate of the value of people and his criterion for determining what conduct is right and what is wrong. Notice: (1) The reason why the disciples plucked the grain, as implied in vs. 25. (Matt. 12:1 says expressly that they were hungry.) (2) Why the Pharisees objected, namely, not because the grain belonged to someone else (see Deut. 23:25), but because plucking it was labor and violated the Sabbath. (3) On what ground Jesus defended their actions, citing a case in which David, to satisfy hunger, violated the sanctity of the Temple, which was, if possible, even more sacred than the Sabbath (see Matt. 12:15). (4) What this implies as to the value of men, even in respect to their ordinary physical needs, as compared with ancient and sacred institutions. (5) Notice the remarkable saying of vs. 27. In view of what Jesus says in the preceding section about fasting, would it be legitimate to infer from this statement that he held the general principle that institutions are made for men and not men for institutions, and that it is always more important to care for men than to con-

serve the sanctity of the institution? (6) If vs. 28 means that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, how do you think in view of vs. 27 he would have men use the Sabbath? (7) What two interests again come into conflict in this narrative and explain the attitude of the Pharisees?

Read Mark 3:1-6. This is another of the Sabbath incidents, in which again Jesus and the Pharisees come into conflict. (1) What does the story imply as to the belief of the Pharisees about healing on the Sabbath day? (2) What does Jesus' question in vs. 4 imply as to what he thought was more important, keeping the Sabbath rules, or relieving human suffering? (3) See Luke 13:14, telling how at another time Jesus ignored the Sabbath law. Doubtless these scribes reasoned just as the ruler of the synagogue in Luke 13:14 did. What is wrong about this reasoning? Why should not the disciples have waited for their breakfast? Why should not the healing have been put off to another day? (4) What does vs. 5 imply as to what Jesus considered to be the cause of the attitude of the Pharisees? What does it imply as to the depth of his feeling on the question?

Reviewing this whole series of incidents, (1) what do you judge was Jesus' feeling and conviction about the relative importance of preserving ancient religious customs and institutions unchanged and doing what is for the welfare of men? (2) What did he regard as of highest value in the world? (3) How fundamental do you think his thought about this was? Would it profoundly affect his whole idea of life and of religion? (4) Did he believe that in this he represented the mind of God? (5) Had anybody ever before him expressed such a principle? (7) Was it for this reason that the scribes and Pharisees opposed him?

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*Suggestions for further study:* 1. In the sections just studied there are references to the publicans, the scribes, the Pharisees, and the Herodians. Which of these terms represent people of a certain occupation, which denote sects or parties? 2. What was the business of a publican? 3. What was the occupation of a scribe? What was the relative standing of the two in Jewish society? 4. For what did the Pharisees stand? How were they esteemed? 5. Who were the Herodians, and what did they represent? 6. How strictly did the Pharisees observe the Sabbath? Did they follow the law of the Old Testament strictly, interpret it, or add to it? 7. What estimate did the Jews of Jesus' day put upon fasting? How often did a strict Pharisee fast? How often did the law require one to fast? On all these questions see *Dictionary of the Bible*.

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## 8. THE CHOICE OF TWELVE COMPANIONS. LUKE 6:12-19

In Luke 6:20-49 there is a very interesting report of a discourse of Jesus, chiefly discussing how men should treat one another. Just preceding this discourse, probably taken by Luke from the same book from which he took his story of the preaching of John the Baptist and of Jesus' temptation, is the story of Jesus' choice of twelve companions and of the wide reputation and popularity which he had at this time attained. Matthew has in his chaps. 5, 6, 7<sup>1</sup> a much longer discourse than that of Luke, but so like it in many parts and in the order of those parts that resemble Luke's discourse as to make it probable that, while the two evangelists used different gospels as their sources at this point, the two discourses are fundamentally the same. Matthew has no story of the choice of the twelve

<sup>1</sup> Commonly called the Sermon on the Mount.

companions, though he gives their names in 10:2-4. In this study we shall first take up Luke's story of the choice of the twelve companions and the widespread fame of Jesus, and then Matthew's report of the discourse.

Read Luke 6:12-16. Consider how Jesus prepared for this important act of choosing his companions. Notice in Mark 3:14 a statement of the purpose for which he chose them, and consider what is the relation between their being with him and their going out to preach.

Read Luke 6:17-19 and observe over how wide a territory the reputation of Jesus had spread, and for what purpose people followed him.

#### 9. JESUS' IDEALS OF CONDUCT. MATT., CHAPS. 5, 6, 7

Run rapidly through these three chapters and notice that they are made up wholly of teachings of Jesus without narratives. This is the longest collection of sayings of Jesus anywhere in the first three Gospels. But it is not simply a collection of sayings. They form an organized discourse, the chief theme of which is "righteousness" (see 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1), more specifically the righteousness that is demanded for participation in the Kingdom of Heaven, that is the Kingdom of God (see especially 5:20).

Righteousness is "the conduct and character that are right," or more exactly "the conduct and character that God requires and that make one acceptable to him." It is probable that Jesus' disregard of the Pharisaic ideas about fasting, Sabbath, etc., had led to the charge being made against him that he was a perverter of morals, breaking down the authority of the Old Testament, and teaching men not to live according to its laws. It is such a criticism that he seems to be answering in 5:17: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." And again in vs. 20 he turns the criticism against his critics, saying that it is they whose moral standards are too low: "For unless your righteousness is higher than that of the scribes and Pharisees you shall by no means have a share in the kingdom of heaven." This statement that he is raising, not lowering standards of conduct, establishing, not breaking down morals, is illustrated by a series of examples in the remainder of this chapter.

We shall not undertake to study this discourse entire, but shall select from it the passages which express most clearly its central idea.

Read Matt. 5:1, 2. To whom, according to these verses, did Jesus address the discourse? To whom does "ye" of vss. 11, 13, 14 refer?

Read Matt. 5:3-12. These verses (commonly called the Beatitudes from the fact that the word translated "blessed" at the beginning of each sentence is in the Latin Bible *beati*, that is, "happy") present in a series of aphorisms or proverbs Jesus' ideal of character—the character which God approves and which will give one a part in the Kingdom of Heaven. Notice especially vss. 3, 10, "theirs is the kingdom of heaven," and vs. 9, "they shall be called sons of God." They doubtless describe not several classes of people but several characteristics of one class. Read these verses through again one by one and notice what element of character each verse sets forth. Are these the characteristics which the Pharisees exemplified and cultivated? Are they the characteristics which are generally esteemed today? What kind of person would he be who had all these characteristics? What kind of society would that be that was made up of people who had these characteristics?

Read Matt. 5:13-16. These verses present two things which the disciples of Jesus are expected to do in the world. Both are expressed in symbolic language—"the salt of the earth," "the light of the world." Remembering that salt was in ancient times the only thing that people had with which to keep food from decaying, what responsibility does Jesus lay on his disciples by calling them "*the salt of the earth*"? Of what danger does he warn them in the words, "but if the salt has lost its savor"? Remembering that a lamp shines not to make itself conspicuous but to give light to others, that is to enable them to see things clearly, what responsibility does Jesus lay on his disciples in the words, "Ye are the light of the world"? Is it possible for them to escape this responsibility? See the last half of vs. 14 and vs. 15. Consider carefully how serious an obligation Jesus imposes on his followers in this paragraph.

Read Matt. 5:17-20. What criticism of Jesus does vs. 17 answer? What gave rise to that criticism? In vss. 18, 19 Jesus strongly affirms the permanence of the law. In view of his treatment of the Sabbath and fasting, can these verses be understood to refer to the specific commands of the law, or must they be taken as a strong affirmation of the permanence of the central moral principle of the law? For evidence of what Jesus regards as the essential part of the law see Mark 12:28-32.

In vs. 20 Jesus affirms that his standard of moral conduct is higher than that of the Pharisees. Does he mean that it demands more strict keeping of rules (for example, about the Sabbath, and foods, and fasting) or a more complete control by the principle of regard for the welfare of others? The study of the next paragraph will furnish an illustration.

Read Matt. 5:11-44. In these verses we have the first of a series of examples in which Jesus illustrates the superiority of the righteousness which he demands to that of the Pharisees. Notice that he represents the teachers of his day ("ye have heard" doubtless means "you have been taught in the synagogue and school") as laying all emphasis on the outward deed of violence, while he condemns also and even more strongly the inward feeling and the words that express this feeling. Think over carefully all that this implies. If one's heart, one's feelings, are right will his deeds be wrong? Where can you best purify a stream, at the source or at its mouth?

What do vss. 23, 24 imply as to the acceptableness to God of the worship of a man who has wronged his fellow and not made it right? How does this teaching agree with the teaching in Mark 2:27 as to the value of men? Do "wickedness" toward men and "worship" of God go well together?

Read Matt. 5:43-48. (If you have time read also 5:27-42, but vss. 43-48 contain the heart of the matter.) Over against a spirit of hatred toward anyone Jesus teaches love toward all, even our enemies. Does this mean that we should approve and admire them, or that we should wish them well and do them good? Does it mean that we should love our enemies and not our friends? What does the example of God to which Jesus appeals in vs. 45 show respecting this matter? In what particular matter does vs. 48 mean that we should be perfect as God is? See Luke 6:36.

Read Matt. 6:1. In chap. 5 Jesus has emphasized the importance of righteousness of the heart as against righteousness of outward conduct—obedience to rules—



only. Here he speaks of righteousness in the sight of God as against the doing of righteousness before men to be seen by them.

He gives three examples. What is the example in vss. 2-4? What in vss. 5, 6? Notice how similar the form of statement is to that in vss. 2-4. Read vss. 16-18 and notice what example he uses here. Would the principle apply to these three things only, or to all conduct before men?

Read Matt. 7:24-27. In the earlier parts of this discourse Jesus has emphasized the necessity of righteousness that is inward, real, of the heart. But as against a righteousness that demands only outward conformity to rules, there is another kind of unreal righteousness that seems to be inward. It is the righteousness of profession. What does Jesus say in these verses about this kind of righteousness? Notice especially vss. 24 and 26. What is the difference between them?

What is the chief characteristic of Jesus' teaching about the conduct that is acceptable to God as this appears in these chapters, 5, 6, 7, of Matthew? How does it differ from the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees?

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*Suggestions for further study:* 1. The discourse in Luke 6:20-49 is very much like that in Matt., chaps. 5 to 7, but differs from it in two respects: (a) It is shorter, omitting much that is in Matthew, and (b) it is evidently intended for a different group of readers. Which of the two discourses compares Jesus' teaching with that of other Jewish teachers and the Old Testament? What class of Christians would be most interested in this form of the discourse? For what class of readers would the form that omits this element of comparison be best adapted? 2. The words of Matt. 5:39, "Resist not him that is evil," have been the occasion of much discussion and perplexity, especially in times of war. In view of the connection in which they occur and the general character of Jesus' teaching as you have studied it thus far, do you think that Jesus intended these words to be taken as an absolute rule, or as a striking illustration of the general principle that we should love our enemies? Would love for one's enemies forbid us ever to oppose their plans and efforts? If not, when would it forbid it and when not? 3. Matt. 7:12 is commonly called the "Golden Rule." Why is it so called? What does it mean? Think of illustrations. Is it a fair summary of Jesus' teaching in Matt., chap. 5? Is it a good principle to control all one's treatment of other people? Is it workable between classes and nations, or only between individuals and in narrow circles? 4. Which is simpler to keep, a list of rules, or in heart and practice to follow a principle? Which produces the higher type of character?<sup>1</sup>

#### 10. SOME GALILEAN INCIDENTS NOT RECORDED BY MARK

In Luke's seventh chapter is a group of stories which are not found in Mark and not all of which are in Matthew. They evidently came from that interesting Galilean gospel which Luke frequently uses in the first half of his gospel instead of Mark or to supplement Mark. The first of these stories gives an account of the surprising faith of a gentile soldier. Read Luke 7:1-10. The centurion was evidently an officer in the service of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. The brief narrative shows him to have been a very interesting man. Though a Gentile, he had evidently become interested in the Jews and their religion, and,

<sup>1</sup> A brief treatment of the question *Is the Golden Rule Workable between Nations?* by the author of this course can be secured from the American Institute of Sacred Literature for three cents.

though a hired soldier of Herod, he had won the respect and affection of the Jews. What do the facts stated in vss. 2, 3 imply as to the relation between him and the Jews, and as to his general character and disposition? What is implied in this respect by vss. 4, 5? What characteristics appear in vss. 6-8? What conception of Jesus had the centurion formed? Notice vs. 8 and the implication of the word "also." Over what did he think Jesus had authority? Compare his reasoning with that of the Jews referred to in Mark 3:1-16 and 3:22. Is openness of mind and fairness of judgment confined to any one nation? In the presence of a similar instance of gentile faith Peter said, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that heareth God and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34, 35). Do you think Jesus held the same opinion? The narrative says nothing about Jesus and the centurion ever meeting personally. What do you think would have happened if they had become acquainted?

Read the story of Jesus and the widow of Nain in Luke 7:11-17. Was the inference which the people drew from this incident (vs. 16) a sound one? On what did they probably base it. What most interests *you* in this story—Jesus' sympathy with a sorrowing mother, or his extraordinary power? Which of these two aspects of the story is really of the greatest significance? Which would be the greater loss, to learn that the young man was only apparently dead, so that this was a case of resuscitation rather than restoration from death, or to discover that Jesus really had no sympathy with people, did not care for their welfare or happiness?

The story of Jesus' answer to the messenger of John the Baptist recorded in Luke 7:18-35 falls into three parts: the question and answer, 7:18-23; Jesus' characterization of John, 7:24-28; characterization of the people, 7:29-35.

Read Luke 7:18-23. Recall that John was in prison (Mark 1:14; Luke 3:20), and doubtless had been for some time. Recall also that John had preached a speedily coming day of judgment and a Mightier One than he himself, who should execute swift punishment on evildoers. Read Luke 3:16, 17. If he had had some thought that Jesus might be that Mightier One, would he naturally have been perplexed by Jesus' course of action? Had Jesus carried out the program John had announced for the Coming One, or had he been gentler and more gracious than John himself? Jesus' answer directs John's attention to certain deeds of his life. (Vs. 21 is probably an addition to the original narrative; it is not in Matthew's parallel account.) Do these deeds suggest that Jesus was trying to fulfil John's prediction, or rather that he had a different conception of his work from that which John had had of his successor? The language of Jesus follows rather closely that of Isa., chap. 61. John's prediction of his successor seems suggested by Mal. 3:1 and following. Read both these passages. Would Jesus' answer suggest that there were other prophets than Malachi that John might take into account when forming his idea of God's plan for the world? Is Jesus' answer kindly or harsh? Imagine John receiving this answer and try to state the thoughts and feelings it would produce in his mind. Would he be comforted or distressed by it?

Read Luke 7:24-28. The reply of Jesus to John suggests, however gently, that John was not wholly right in his thought about what was to follow his own work. Does Jesus therefore infer that John was not a prophet of God? Vs. 24 implies that he was no reed shaken in the wind—thinking one thing today, another

thing tomorrow. Would that very firmness help to account for his question to Jesus? Try to state in your own words Jesus' estimate of John as expressed in vss. 24-28.

Vss. 29, 30 are quite evidently not words of Jesus, but a comment of the evangelist Luke, or the writer from whom he derived the story. The last sentence of vs. 28 is possibly also a comment of the latter writer. It seems to be an expression of the Christian feeling that no man outside of Christianity could be quite equal to a Christian.

Read Luke 7:31-35. The illustration taken from the games of children shows Jesus' sense of humor. What characteristic of the people does it illustrate? Notice the incidental evidence of Jesus' social disposition in vss. 33, 34, in contrast with the austerity of John. What does vs. 35 mean? Does Jesus blame John for being different from himself or himself for being unlike John? What impression of Jesus does this whole narrative (7:18-35) give one?

It is a very dramatic story that Luke 7:36-50 relates. Read the passage and give it a name. The characters in the drama are three: Jesus, the Pharisee, the woman. The woman has lived a conspicuously sinful life but wishes to have done with it. Why in that state of mind did she come to Jesus? Had she ever heard of him before? Did she possibly know of the incident related in Mark 2:15-17, or some similar one? What idea of a prophet underlies the words of the Pharisee in vs. 39—one who mingled with men to help them or one who kept himself apart from anybody that was sinful? What course of action was the Pharisee evidently himself approving and following? Why did Jesus follow the other course? Which of them was a real prophet? Does the story that Jesus tells the Pharisee (vss. 40-43) imply that the woman was really a greater sinner than the Pharisee? See Matt. 21:31, 32.

Read Luke 8:1-3. Notice who were Jesus' companions on this evangelistic journey. How large a party did it make? How much attention would it have attracted? Who paid the bills? What does the participation of women in evangelistic work indicate as to Jesus' democratic feeling? Did he put one class above another or one sex above another? Paul afterward said: "In Christ Jesus there is no male and female" (Gal. 3:27, 28). Does this represent the spirit of Jesus?

What impression of Jesus does each of these narratives in Luke 7:1-8:3 give to you? What characteristic appears in them all?

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*Suggestions for further study:* 1. Reviewing all the narratives in 7:1-8:3, none of which are in Mark, does the whole passage seem to you similar in style? It is an interesting thing to compare it in this respect with Luke 3:1-20; 4:1-5:11, most of which probably came from the same older gospel, and on the other hand with the narratives of Mark 2:1-3:6. Which of the two latter passages is most like the one we have just studied? 2. Recall what Mark 2:1-3:6 shows Jesus to have been most interested in, and consider what Luke 7:1-8:3 implies as to his chief interest. Do the two passages show us the same Jesus? If so what is the significance of the fact that these two passages not only now stand in different gospels, but are from different original sources? 3. What is your definition of democracy? What is the fundamental principle of democracy? Did Jesus hold that principle? Is the present-day world as democratic in spirit and practice as he was? Are you? In what respects is the spirit and practice of the community in which you live less democratic than Jesus was?

## 11. JESUS UNDER CRITICISM. MARK 3:19-35

We return now to Mark's narrative. Read Mark 3:19-21. By this time Jesus' work was attracting such wide attention that, as in many other similar cases, it was unpleasant to his relatives and neighbors. John 7:5 helps to explain this. See also Mark 6:3. So, perhaps half in apology, half in complaint, they said he was no longer sane.

Read Mark 3:22-27. The belief in demons was universal in Jesus' day. Men lived in the feeling that they were surrounded by spirits good and evil, and they seem to have thought much more of the evil spirits than of the good. Jesus' cure of the demoniacs attracted much attention and gave the scribes the chance to accuse him of being himself under the power of the prince of evil spirits. What is Jesus' answer to this accusation (vss. 23-27)? Remembering that the demons were malicious and harmful, and that Jesus' work was compassionate and helpful, what do you think of his argument?

Read Mark 3:28-30. Vs. 30 is the comment of the evangelist and shows that he understood Jesus' word about blaspheming against the Holy Spirit to have reference to, or to have been suggested by, the fact that Jesus felt he was casting out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit. Read Matt. 12:27, 28 where this thought is directly expressed. But Luke 12:10 reports a saying of Jesus similar to this in Mark 3:28, 29, except that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is there contrasted with speaking against the Son of Man. This suggests that Jesus meant not to characterize their slander of him as itself a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, but to warn them that in their wilful misrepresentation of him, in their calling good bad, they were on the road toward actually setting themselves against all good, even against God's Spirit. And when they reached this point, then there would be no turning back. They would be "guilty of an eternal sin."

Read Mark 3:31-35 and give a name to the incident. The attitude of Jesus toward his family is somewhat perplexing. Does vs. 21 help to explain it? And does the incident in turn help to explain Matt. 10:37, 38 (see the severer form of the saying in Luke 14:26, 27) and Mark 10:29, 30? If from his baptism and temptation Jesus had regarded himself as devoted to the service of humanity, believing this to be God's will for him, how would the attempt of his family to oppose his teaching and to control his action appear to him? Does this mean that he was indifferent to his family or that he was putting the greater above the less?

## 12. JESUS BEGINS TO TEACH IN PARABLES. MARK 4:1-34

A parable is a story which intentionally bears a double meaning. In its first and obvious meaning it deals with the common experience of men and generally pertains to material things. In this sense it is, unlike the fable, true to ordinary experience, yet not necessarily an actual incident. In its second and less obvious sense it has to do with the moral or religious experience of men. This latter meaning, which is the one for the sake of which the parable is told, is suggested by the first on the principle of analogy, as today we often use illustrations drawn from the farm to illustrate religious things, speaking of the "field" and the "seed" and the "harvest." Parables are not confined to the New Testament (see for

example Nathan's parable to David, II Sam. 12:1-12), but Jesus was particularly fond of this way of teaching and very skilful in using it.

Read Mark 4:1-9, 13-20. Then with the story and Jesus' explanation of its spiritual meaning in mind, read 4:10-12. Notice that Jesus implies that the multitude will not—are not intended to—see the full meaning of the parable. Yet it was spoken to them (vss. 1, 2), and they doubtless knew that it was a parable, that Jesus was not teaching agriculture. If they understood it at all, they would probably think of the soils as representing themselves. What warning would it then convey to them? But as Jesus explained it to the disciples, the disciples would doubtless think of the parable from the point of view of the sower. What would it then teach them as to what they were to expect as the result of the preaching of the gospel? Was it to be accepted by everybody and would everybody remain steadfast, or were there to be many kinds of hearers and various results? Was this forecast probably in accordance with Jesus' own experience thus far? If so what does it show as to what he expected as the result of his work? Is the parable as a whole optimistic or pessimistic?

Read Mark 4:21-25. This passage is doubtless intended to apply to the use of parables. What does it teach as to the use which those who understood the parables are to make of them? Vs. 22 seems to say that the very concealment of the truth in the parable, that is, the fact that it has an outer meaning that is easy to understand and remember, and an inner meaning that is less obvious, is for the purpose that it may eventually be made clear. Would a literal statement of spiritual truth be more likely to be forgotten than a parable? What do vss. 24, 25 mean as applied to learning and teaching truth?

Read Mark 4:26-29. This also like the first one is a farmer's parable—a parable of the seed. But the emphasis and teaching are different. Read it carefully and see if the key to the meaning is not in vs. 28: "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." What does it suggest as to the preacher's responsibility and the forces that work with him? What as to the way in which results come?

Read Mark 4:30-32. This parable emphasizes the difference between the size of the seed and of that which grows from it. What does this suggest as to the way things work in the Kingdom of God? What effect would the parable have on the minds of the disciples?

Read Mark 4:33, 34, and then try to summarize the teaching of the whole passage on these points: (a) What a parable is and why Jesus used parables. (b) How Jesus expected his work and that of his disciples in preaching the truth to become effective.

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*Suggestions for further study.* 1. In Matt., chap. 13, all but one of the parables in Mark, chap. 4, are repeated and certain other ones added. All but one of these additional parables are found in Matthew only. Probably he drew them from an older gospel which he only of our evangelists had, another of those "many" gospels spoken of in Luke 1:1. Turn to Matthew and pick out his added parables, and study them as has been suggested above for the parables in Mark. Do they convey ideas about the Kingdom not contained in Mark? 2. Luke 9:51-18:14 is without parallel in Mark and is probably wholly taken from still another of Luke's "many" gospels. Turn over the pages of this part of Luke and note the parables which it contains. Are they also parables about the Kingdom of God?

What does the existence of parables in these three gospels indicate as to Jesus' habit in using parables? Is it likely that a complete record of his life would give us many more parables?

### 13. EVENTS BY THE SEA OF GALILEE, AND RETURN TO NAZARETH

Read Mark 4:35-41. Does this incident illustrate Jesus' power over nature or his influence upon men, or both? In the long history of the race, which is more important? Jesus rebuked the disciples for their fear and lack of faith. In whom did he mean that they should have had faith, and why? See Mark 11:22; Luke 12:22-31.

Read Mark 5:1-10. We have here another illustration of the large part which the belief in demons played in the life of the people of that day. There were no asylums for the care of the insane, and no scientific knowledge of their condition or medical treatment of them, but many people tried to cure them (see Luke 9:49; 11:19). The methods which they used were often crude. The apocryphal Book of Tobit (6:7) tells of smoking the demons out with smoke from the burning of the heart and liver of a fish, and Josephus tells of drawing the demon out through the nostrils by the root of a certain plant. In the Middle Ages it was common to attempt to expel the demon by torturing the possessed person. How would you describe Jesus' method? Does he treat the demoniacs as great sinners, or as unfortunates? Was he behind his times or ahead of them? If the latter, what made him so, scientific knowledge or love for men?

Read Mark 5:1-20. The story of vss. 11-13 is told from the point of view of the beliefs of that day. It could not, of course, be otherwise. Is it perhaps the story which the swineherds told (vs. 14)? What was the motive that underlay the request of the people in vs. 17? How does it compare with Jesus' thought as expressed in Luke 12:6, 7; 13:15, 16; 14:5? Did Jesus regard the beasts as of no account, or did he account men as of more value? What was Jesus' reason for sending the man back to his own people (vs. 19)?

Read Mark 5:21-24, 35-43. Try to picture the whole scene to yourself: the ruler of the synagogue, a man of importance in the town; his young daughter lying very ill, apparently dying; the physician holding out no hope; someone told the father about Jesus and the cures which he had wrought, and advised that he be sent for; the ruler hurried away, found Jesus, fell at his feet and besought him to come. On his way a woman stopped Jesus. When her case had been cared for, messengers came saying it was too late, the girl was dead. Jesus bade the father not to give up hope, and they went on; they came to the house; Jesus saw the girl, said she was not dead, but in a swoon; he put out the crowd of neighbors and hired mourners, took the child by the hand, lifted her up, and told her parents to give her something to eat. What impression of Jesus does the whole narrative give you? Did Mark mean to say that Jesus was mistaken in believing that the girl was not dead? What did Luke think about it (Luke 8:53)? Which is of the greatest importance to Jesus' own generation and to later ones, his sympathy for people, his concern for children and parents, or his power to bring a girl, apparently or really dead, back to life? Which of the two spreads like leaven, preserves the world as "the salt of the earth," and lightens its darkness as "the light of the world"?

Read Mark 5:25-34, noticing that Jesus ascribes the cure to the woman's faith (vs. 34).

Read Mark 6:1-6. What qualities were people compelled to recognize in Jesus? Was it his words or his works that first arrested their attention? Why did they refuse to receive his message? In which did they suffer the greater loss, in that they failed to receive his message, or that he did but few works of healing among them?

*Suggestions for further study:* Several of the narratives which we have been studying show Jesus exercising healing power over the sick and demonized. Was this power altogether peculiar to himself, or is it something which many have had, and many more might have? Notice that Jesus commissioned his disciples not only to preach the gospel, but to cast out demons and to heal the sick (Luke 9:2). The Book of Acts also records that Peter and Paul also healed the sick. In various ages of the church, including our own day, men have claimed and have seemed to possess power to restore people to health. Certainly also there is abundant evidence that hope, faith in God, courage, contribute powerfully to keep people well and to help in their recovery when they are ill. Would it at all diminish the significance of Jesus' power if we had reason to believe that what he possessed was an exceptional measure of power shared also by many others? If this was the character of Jesus' power to heal, ought we to endeavor to develop this kind of power? Would it be most valuable in connection with sanitation, hygienic surroundings, and good food, and as a supplement to nursing and medicine for the sick? If we ought to develop this power, why should we do so?

The Gospels record frequently that Jesus was moved to use his healing power by sympathy, compassion, interest in people. Probably the power attracted most attention at the time, and has done so since, as the narratives have been read for centuries. But it is worth considering which was really most significant, and which has had most influence in the world. What does power without concern for people accomplish? What would a vast increase of it in the world do? What would the universal spread of sympathy without the exercise of any extraordinary power do for the world? How many of the followers of Jesus have had his peculiar healing power? How many have been moved by his love to feel a like interest in people? Which of the two is possible to everyone? Which is the world's greatest asset, force of any kind, or love, concern for our fellows?

### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW (STUDY I)

1. To what human emotions did John's preaching chiefly appeal? To what opposite ones the preaching of Jesus?
2. What was the essential difference between the "authority" with which Jesus taught and that of the scribes?
3. How did Jesus' curing of the sick influence his career?
4. Do you think that the church of Christ ought to follow his example in that matter? If so, by what means?
5. What good reasons have Christian missionary societies for sending out medical missionaries and establishing hospitals?
6. Why did Jesus pray?
7. Name those characteristics of the healing work of Jesus which aroused the antagonism of the Pharisees.
8. How did these same characteristics strengthen his influence on those whom he healed?
9. Which are more influential, deeds or words?
10. In his choice of friends, how did Jesus manifest a democratic spirit?
11. Name specific occasions upon which Jesus ignored or violated the Sabbath law of the Jews.

12. What was the general principle upon which Jesus based his conduct on the Sabbath day?
13. How would such a principle work today?
14. Was it easier for Jesus to act upon this principle in the world of his day than it is for his followers to do so now in America? Give reasons for your answer.
15. Did the attitude of Jesus toward the religious rules and customs of his day mean that he thought that all should be destroyed?
16. If not, on what basis would he choose those which should be preserved and if necessary modified?
17. How would you apply this principle today to the church, to government?
18. Why did Jesus need helpers?
19. In what sense were they referred to by him as the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world"?
20. What is the chief characteristic of Jesus' teaching concerning the motives of conduct and the conduct itself which will make men fit for membership in the Kingdom of God as stated and illustrated in Matt., chaps. 5, 6, 7?

### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW (STUDY II)

1. Name some of the sources from which the writers of our Gospels secured their facts.
2. Of the Gospels which we now have, which seems to be the earliest?
3. Which Gospel gives a brief story of Jesus' youth?
4. What facts concerning Jesus' home, family, and early life can be gleaned from our records?
5. What great prophet appeared among the Jews while Jesus was a young man?
6. How did Jesus manifest his attitude toward the spirit and work of this prophet?
7. Give the essence of the message of John in a few words.
8. Was it a message which was needed by his people? By Jesus?
9. What was the immediate result of Jesus' baptismal experience upon his thought and action?
10. What different kinds of temptations assailed Jesus in his period of seclusion?
11. Give your idea of the reasons why these particular temptations came to Jesus.
12. Do you think that a man's greatest powers may constitute his greatest temptation? If so, what safeguards has he?
13. Can you combine Jesus' answers to the three temptations into a statement, and the decisions which Jesus reached in these forty days of meditations, as to (a) his attitude toward God, (b) his work, and (c) the methods which he would use?
14. Can you make a similar statement concerning John the Baptist, his idea of God, of his own work, and of the methods which he believed would accomplish his purpose?
15. John was a good man, believing in God, a man of power, unselfishly devoting himself to the salvation of his people. Did his message do them good?
16. Jesus and John lived in the same country, had the same training, and practically the same environment and outward experiences. What was the vital difference in their religious experience?
17. How do you account for it?